

Bodin. With the Catholic L'Hdpital in the "Trait6 de la Reformation de la Justice " we live in the abstract, and yet it is the abstract applied to the real, the abstractions of the practical statesman, which are usually illusions to all but himself and the select few like himself. For L'Hdpital, reason is the great fact in the world. It is universal, and laws are its expressions, more or less varied according to race and circumstances. Force should only be the servant of reason, "all other force is bestial, reprobate, condemned of God and man/" The prince who would wield absolute power over the subject is included in this condemnation. The power of the prince is based on justice, and force should only be the instrument of justice. To violate the conscience is to violate justice, and therefore the prince must accord liberty of conscience, refrain from becoming the aggressive champion of one cult by proscribing its rivals, and should protect all from persecution. Moreover, mildness will always achieve more than rigour. In the attempt to realise these principles L'Hopital failed, for Machiavelli, not L'Hdpital, was the true mentor of Catherine de Medici, and the spirit of party was too strong for the legislator, who was a practical moral philosopher. His spirit sank under the shock of the Massacre of St Bartholomew, which he only survived a year. In his retirement he had recourse to his pen, that potent instrument of great statesmen out of office, in order to win adherents for his gospel of toleration, founded on reason ("But de la Guerre et de la Paix," 1570). Peace, he contended, is the result of compromise or victory. To conquer the Huguenots is impossible, or very difficult. You must either exterminate or tolerate them. The attempt to exterminate them would mean the endless protraction of civil war. But the wise physician seeks to heal the body, by gentle not by violent means, and the malady of the State can only be healed by justice and moderation. Though not a Protestant, he sympathised with the determination of the Huguenots to defend themselves from oppression. By compromising, the king will not suffer in his dignity, even if compelled to yield to those who have taken arms in self-defence, and the king is not justified in pushing his rights to the length of doing harm to the welfare of the State. His will, his right, is not arbitrary.